

Jefferson Morley – “Angleton, Cuba, and Assassination”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axrupUpqFcM> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axrupUpqFcM>)

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The Future of Freedom Foundation is pleased to announce one of the most fascinating, important, and relevant conferences in our 27-year history.

Entitled “The National Security State and JFK,” the conference was held on Saturday, June 3, 2017, at the Dulles Airport Marriott in Northern Virginia.

Jefferson Morley is moderator of of JFK Facts (JFKFacts.org). He worked as an editor and reporter at The Washington Post, The Nation, The New Republic, and Harper’s Magazine. His work has appeared in The New York Review of Books, The New York Times Book Review, The Washington Post Book World, Reader’s Digest, Rolling Stone, and Slate. His first book was Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA (2008). His book Snow-Storm in August (2013) details what happened when the anti-slavery movement first came to Washington, D.C., during Andrew Jackson’s presidency. Morley is also the author of FFF’s ebook CIA & JFK: The Secret Assassination Files. His newest book, a biography of James Jesus Angleton, CIA chief of CIA Counterintelligence from 1954 to 1975, will be published by St. Martin’s Press this year.

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[Music] Jefferson morally is the moderator of JFK facts org which I consider one of the best if not the best websites that cover news relating to John Kennedy and the Kennedy assassination he worked as an editor and reporter at The Washington Post the nation the New Republic in Harper's Magazine his work has appeared in the New York Review of Books the New York Times Book Review The Washington Post book world Reader's Digest Rolling Stone and slate his first book was our man in Mexico Winston Scott and the hidden history of the CIA his book his book snowstorm in August details what happened when the anti-slavery movement first came to Washington DC during Andrew Johnson's presidency Jeff is also the author of ffc best-selling ebook CIA and JFK the secret assassination files his newest book a biography of James Jesus angleton CIA chief of CIA counterintelligence from 1954 to 1975 will be published by st. Martin's Press later this year the title of Jeff's talk is Angleton Cuba and assassination Jeff Morley [Applause] hi thank you all Thank You Jacob for that introduction and setting up this marvelous event at which I find myself learning something new with every speaker I hope to reward and thank you

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speaker I hope to reward and thank you all for coming I've met a lot of people who I only knew by email it's always gratifying to meet people in person not digitally so thank you for your coming I hope to reward your interest by telling you a story about James Angleton the chief of counterintelligence of the Central Intelligence Agency during the Kennedy administration this story speaks directly to some of the themes that we've already heard this describes the actions of the CIA as Kennedy pursued the strategy of peace the Jeffrey Sachs talked about it illuminates the reality of double government that Michael Glennon talked about and it adds some new details about Operation Northwoods which doug horn talked about so um I couldn't have given this presentation or learned this story without the help of several people and I want to thank them

first of all John Newman who introduced me to the Oswald the CIA's Oswald file more than 20 years ago Malcolm Blount who came all the way from England to attend this conference who explicate some of the puzzles that we find in that file and Bill sympa who alerted me to one of the key stories in there I want to emphasize before I start also that nothing that I say in this talk depends on a conspiratorial interpretation of the assassination of President Kennedy um if I'm not gonna try whatever your opinion I'm not going to try and dissuade you from it or convince you of something else I don't really have a theory of the Kennedy assassination at least not one that I talked about in public if you buy me a drink later maybe I'll share one if you buy me two drinks I'll show you two but that's not what I came here to talk about I didn't come to talk about that theories I came to talk about facts and everything that I say in this presentation is empirical fact the fact is James Aang was a was the embodiment of Cold War

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was a was the embodiment of Cold War espionage and has become that in our popular culture he's a historic world historic important figure that you may think you know something about and so you should and you should buy my forthcoming book the ghost the secret life of CIA spy master James Jesus Angleton which will be in bookstores in October angleton deserves his legend he was an extraordinarily influential figure in American government during the Cold War a veritable founding father of the CIA all of 30 years old when the CIA was founded in 1947 he spent the next three decades distinguishing himself elevating himself into a position of transcendental influence on the US government he had a vast array of contacts from the Ivy League to the Vatican to organized crime to the Masons to the Mossad he cultivated a deep knowledge of the Soviet intelligence services the Cheka the mkdd and the KGB and he knew how to ingratiate himself with men of power like Allen Dulles J Edgar Hoover and Richard Nixon as chief of the agency's counterintelligence staff from 1954 to 1974 he established a fiefdom of secret operations within the CIA a CIA within the CIA that virtually no one in the elected government of the United States knew about and he ran it for 20 years in Angleton's story we find both a chilling cold war drama and a pivotal moment in the evolution of US government and the emergence of the American national security state the gist of my argument today will strike most people in this room as more common sensical than original the Kennedy's assassination was a decisive moment in the evolution of the American national national security state I only want to take this time to make that point with slightly more precision it was the aftermath of JFK's assassination that was the pivotal moment at least as far as the consolidation of the national security

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consolidation of the national security regime went and Angleton was a key figure in that moment the assassination in Dallas was a moment of great danger for the CIA if the agency or any of its employees had been held responsible for the wrongful death of the president its powers might have been curbed the clandestine service might have been abolished as president as former president Harry Truman urged one month after JFK's murder if the CIA's role in the events leading up to Dallas had been shared with the Congress and the American people the ambitions and the prerogatives of the national security state might have been checked that did not happen thanks in no small part to James Angleton my story has three strands and I'm going to summarize them before I explain them the first is Angleton's a mole hunt this was his search for a KGB spy in the ranks of the CIA and as he hunted for the mole he monitored the movements of a defector to the Soviet Union named Lee Oswald the second is Angleton's largely unknown role in JFK's Cuba policy angleton discussed the assassination of Fidel Castro as early as 1961 and he advised the Pentagon on regime-change policies in 1963 the two strands intersected in the fall of 1963 when Oswald showed up in Mexico City at the Cuban consulate and the Russian embassy Angleton staff was immediately notified and the third strand of the story grows out of the first two how and why Angleton hid what he knew about Oswald from the Warren Commission the Congress and the public with consequences that we are still grappling with today now let us begin at the beginning Jim Angleton and Jack Kennedy were born six months apart in 2000 1917 as with JFK 2017 is the centennial of Angleton's birth Angleton and Kennedy both came

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birth Angleton and Kennedy both came from families newly wealthy families and they inherited the privileges of money foreign travel and an Ivy League education they both embodied the they both embodied the aspirations and the fears of the American elite after World War two and indeed they knew each other. Angleton and his wife Cicely lived on Glee bro live just off Glee Road in North Arlington and they were social friends with John and Jackie Kennedy who lived in Georgetown like many others the Angleton's found the Kennedy's enormous ly attractive JFK's ironic charm reminded Sicily Angleton of a certain Shakespearean aristocrat when Kennedy was elected president in November 1960 she wrote to a friend Prince Hamlet is in the White House by the time of Kennedy's election Angleton was already knowledgeable about Lee Harvey Oswald his interest had been prompted by the arrest of one of the CIA's most valuable spies in the Soviet Union a man named Peter Popov Popov was a Soviet intelligence officer who had been feeding the agency up a stream of information about the Red Army for years in October 1959 October 19th or 20th Popov was arrested he was later tried and executed in the offices of the CIA then housed in a series of temporary buildings along the reflecting pool on the National Mall the CIA men debated what had gone wrong Bill Harvey chief of CIA Berlin-based thought Popoff had been exposed by the sloppy tradecraft of one of his Moscow handlers so did Bill hood another senior officer who was involved in the handling of Popov Angleton disagreed he suspected Popov had been betrayed from within by what he called the mole a spy within the ranks of the CIA itself an angle Tain's suspicion soon hardened into a fixed idea which fueled his legendary mole hunt it all began with peter Popoff surest said

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began with peter Popoff surest said CIA's in-house historian David ro bars after that Angleton became fixated on the mole it was not coincidentally it was two weeks after Popoff's arrest that the paper trail connecting Angleton to oswald begins one of Angleton's most trusted staff members was a woman named Jane Roman she served as his liaison officer handling all communications with other federal agencies on November 2nd 1959 in her daily call with Sam Pappas the FBI's the is on to the agency package asked her about a story that had appeared on a seven of the previous of the Washington Post on the previous Saturday ex-marine asked Soviet citizenship the wire service reported that a 20 year old former Marine from Texas named Lee Harvey Oswald had shown up at the US Embassy in Moscow and announced his intention to become a Soviet citizen when Roman received a cable about Oswald from the State Department the next day she scrawled on top mr. Pappas would like to know about this ex-marine who recently defected into the USSR Oswald was an obvious target of the counterintelligence staff interest it wasn't unheard of for an American to move to Moscow in 1959 but it was certainly unusual Roman seen here routed the cable to a colleague Burt O'Neill the chief of an office known as the Special Investigations Group the sig as it was known was responsible for keeping files on defectors O'Neill serviced to supervise the staff of eight people including a woman named Betty editor she was the master of the office filing system editor described the Special Investigations Group as the office that spied on spies the sig was the operational arm of Angleton's Mulund and not coincidentally the sig controlled Oswald's file the proof of Angleton's

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Oswald's file the proof of Angleton's interest in Oz WA can be seen in the CIA's unusual handling of his defection standard CIA procedure called for the opening of a personality file known in the lingo of many federal agencies as a 201 file the CIA central file registry had tens of thousands of 201 files some of them fat some of them thin some of them filled with classified information some of them holding only a couple of newspaper clippings Oswald an ex-marine with a security clearance who had threatened to share military secrets with the enemy certainly qualified for a 201 file nonetheless the Special Investigations Group chose not to open a 201 file on him instead on December 9th 1959 the Office of Security opened a file on Oswald labeled OS 51 164 this file then became the repository of all information received about Oswald needless to say the Office of Security did not create Oswald's file without consulting Angleton's staff the sig served as quote a liaison office between the CI staff and the office of security Betty egular later explained we worked very closely with the office of security in the case of Oswald the unusual procedure had to be approved at the highest level Robert Bannerman who served as deputy director of the office security in 1959 told historian

John Neumann Jim Angleton was in on this Angleton's interest in Oswald was finely tuned the effect of creating an OS file instead of a 201 file was to ensure that information about the ex-marine was held more tightly so if someone inside the agency like the KGB mole that Oswald that angleton thought was working in his midst wanted to know more about the ex-marine whose defects in the Washington Post had reported he would have to ask for the file in writing provide a name office and phone number

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provide a name office and phone number if there was a 201 file that paper trail would not have been created by creating a restricted OS file and not a 201 file Oswald could determine who in the ranks of the CIA was interested in him the unusual handling of the Oswald file was one of Angleton's techniques for searching for the mole whom he thought had betrayed peter Popoff in October 1960 the State Department sent a notice to the CIA stating that it wanted up-to-date records on all recent defectors that missive according to the CIA's account prodded the central the counterintelligence staff to act in December 1960 a year after Oswald's defection betty aguilar completed the paperwork to create a 201 file for Oswald it now contained a dozen items for memos from the State Department to from CIA to from FBI one from the Office of Naval Intelligence and three newspaper clippings for the next three years all reports on Oswald from anywhere in the federal government would be routed to the sig and into the file controlled by Betty editor now let's turn to Cuba after the election of John Kennedy in November 1960 angleton became more involved in the agency's operations in Tuba more involved than I knew before I wrote this book and more involved in scholars and any scholars and journalists have known until now unlike his liberal friends Angleton was immune to the notion that Fidel Castro was a nationalist or a social reformer with whom the United States could do business after the humiliation of the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 Angleton was drawn more deeply into Cuba operations on May 4th 1961 the National Security Council tasked him with a new job to quote create train and support a highly motivated and professionally competent a political and career security service

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political and career security service which will be dedicated to the preservation of the dead of the democratic form of government angleton insured was in charge of creating an intelligence service for post Castro Cuba to that end angleton discussed assassinating Castro in November 1961 Angleton and Bill Harvey now chief of the CIA's Cuba task force met with Peter Wright scientists to work for the British equivalent of the FBI the mi5 in his memoir spy catcher Wright said Harvey grilled him about how the CIA pursued assassination of its enemies Angleton took such careful notes that Wright began to have qualms and second thoughts quote the sight of Angleton's notebook was beginning to unnerve me they seemed so determined so convinced that this was the way to handle Castro and I was slightly put out that I could not help more Angleton questioned President Kennedy's Cuba policies especially after the Missile Crisis of 1962 when the CIA's overflights confirmed the construction of missile silos in Cuba Kennedy went public with the intelligence and demanded their removal while the Joint Chiefs and most of Kennedy's civilian advisors have we've heard before recommended an immediate invasion Kennedy played for time privately he promised Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev that he would not invade the island and the Soviet leader fearing a wider war ordered the dismantling of the middl missiles on the brink of what might have been a nuclear holocaust Kennedy had produced peace his popularity surged the Democrats did much better than expected in the 1962 midterm elections but Kennedy also encountered a riptide of resentment from the military and intelligence agencies quote the president emerged with his credibility and prestige measurably enhanced wrote Pentagon historian Stephen Riordan in his official history of the Joint Chiefs

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his official history of the Joint Chiefs of Staff but two to end the crisis he made compromises and concessions that his military advisors considered in many ways unnecessary and excessive the consensus on the Joint Chiefs of Staff was that the United States had come out the poorer end of the bargain angleton shared this view late in life he wrote that Kennedy had fumbled away a chance to to liberate Cuba quote

there was first Kennedy's unmistakable faltering of will at the Bay of Pigs followed eighteen months later by his reluctance to make good the show down an exact fair price for the Missile Crisis by forcing Castro's expulsion from Cuba for having conspired with the Kremlin to bring Soviet nuclear power into the Western Hemisphere for Jim Angleton his wife's analogy to of JFK to Hamlet was apt like the Danish prince the American president was intelligent self-absorbed and indecisive in Angleton's view he lacked will and the United States was weaker for it in mid 1963 Angleton made his most important contribution to Cuba policy a secret working paper entitled Cuban control and action capabilities this document was not provided by the CIA was found by in the Pentagon records by the assassination records Review Board it was Declassified in 1997 as Doug Horn talked earlier Angleton and advocates of overthrowing castro this was a disheartening time the spring of 1963 in March Attorney General Bob Kennedy ordered the FBI to crack down on Cuban exiles who were using South Florida as a base for attacks on ships doing business with Cuba the Cuban colony and Miami exploded in outrage the Cuban revolutionary counseled the CIA funded umbrella organization that was supposed to constitute the new government in Havana dissolved an acrimonious denunciation of the president many military and intelligence officials were concerned that the Soviet

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officials were concerned that the Soviet Union was solidifying its foothold in the Western Hemisphere while Kennedy was pursuing a nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviets that the Joint Chiefs thought was ill-advised in a meeting on May 1st 1963 the Joint Chiefs of Staff resurrected the secret plan for Cuba known by the deceptively bucolic code name Northwoods the Northwoods plans as Doug explained earlier involved were first developed after the Bay of Pigs Pro fiasco they sought to create a justification pretext for a u.s. invasion the pentagon planners on May 1st 1963 recommended what they called quote an engineered provocation saying that a violent incident that could be blamed on Castro would have advantages in quote control timing simplicity and security the chiefs passed on their recommendation to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara who ignored it he knew that President Kennedy and his brother were not interested did not want to overthrow Castro by invasion the Kennedys preferred the idea of autonomous operations against Castro guerrilla attacks launched from outside the United States with US policy influx Angleton contributed an assessment of the Cuban target what were Cuba's capabilities what were its weaknesses what would the US military have to overcome in order to retake Cuba from the Communists Angleton studied the files and he wrote up his findings in a other words through actually three documents a 16-page working paper and two other attached documents and on May 23rd 1963 he distributed this document to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the of 15 federal agencies in the cover in this cover letter Angleton stated that this was not merely a provisional statement on the cuban situation but was an all source assessment of the communist control system Angleton intended his paper to serve as nothing

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intended his paper to serve as nothing less as the foundation of a new national policy to eliminate the Castro regime in 1963 or 1964 the Cuban capabilities memo in my view is one of the most important documents bearing Angleton's name to ever surface it confirms his leading role in Cuba policy in 1963 while demonstrating something of his intellectual power Angleton's analysis of the strengths of the Castro government was lucid detailed historical and comprehensive angleton asserted that kennedy's no invasion pledge had demoralized Castro's foes he said that the Cuban leader had emerged stronger from the October crisis with up to 400,000 men and women now serving in the militias the Army and the Navy another bulwark of support for the regime he noted were friendship societies in the United States and other countries which sent sympathizers to the island who returned indoctrinated with pro-communist messages or perhaps with missions of sabotage espionage and assassination in the course of his research angleton had reviewed multiple reports of travelers who had wished to conceal their visits to Cuba and he wrote an American citizen for example can enter Mexico with a tourist card not even a passport and obtain a separate visa to travel to Cuba from the Cuban consulate in Mexico City he can go to Cuba and return supplied with a new tourist card obtained in Cuba without any indication that he has ever been there this was remarkably prescient that is

exactly what the defector Lee Oswald would attempt to do four months later enter Mexico with a tourist card go to the Cuban consulate in Mexico City and seek a visa to travel to Cuba thus Angleton's memo is also an important document in the Kennedy record the assassination of President Kennedy

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the memo reveals Angleton's knowledge of and interest in Americans traveling to Cuba via Mexico and via the Cuban consulate in Mexico City in particular it illuminates and confirms a fact that Angleton hid for the rest of his life when Lee Harvey Oswald showed up at the Cuban consulate in Mexico City in September 1963 Angleton was not surprised he was not uninformed he was prepared let me pause here this moment 1963 Angleton was also witting to ongoing efforts of the CIA to assassinate Castro this is one of the best stories and I like this story because Angleton himself is the source of it in June 1963 an FBI surveillance team at National Airport was following a Mafia don named Johnny Roselli who the CIA had enlisted in the plots to kill Castro Roselli got off his plane he got into a car and the FBI agents were astonished to realize that the driver was none other than Bill Harvey former chief of the CIA's Cuba task force and now serving allegedly as the station chief in Rome the FBI agents called Sam Pappas the still the liaison to the agency to complain what was a CIA a u CIA official doing consorting with a mafia boss who incidentally was suspected in no less than 13 murders the FBI when the FBI agents call pavatt they discovered that he was at Angleton's house having dinner package took the call he put the phone down he turned dangled and he said what should I do in Angleton said let's go easy on this the FBI surveillance team was called off and people wonder did Angleton know what Harvey and Rosselli were talking about at Dukes Ebert's restaurant when Harvey was asset from when Angleton was asked that question about Harvey he said I knew he was not a frivolous man

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knew he was not a frivolous man Angleton's people had not forgotten about Lee Harvey Oswald in 1963 all US government reporting on hee still went into the sig file controlled by Betty editor and now that that file contains a State Department cable on Oswald's marriage to a Russian woman in Minsk in 1961 there was a navy memo about his plans to return to the United States with his wife in May 1962 there was an FBI interview with a surly and uncooperative Oswald outside his home in Fort Worth Texas in August 1963 if Oswald was indeed a lone nut as cliche would later have it he was that rare isolated sociopath who was of intense interest to the CIA's counterintelligence staff needless to say Angleton paid attention when J Edgar Hoover sent him three more reports about Oswald in the fall of 1963 the first an FBI member from Dallas arrived in Angleton's office on September 24th Jane Roman signed for it FBI agent James host he reported that Oswald drank to excess and beat his wife and had once passed out leaflets for the pro-castro fair play for Cuba committee one of those friendship societies that Angleton had identified in his Cuban capabilities memo two weeks later Jane Roman sign for another FBI report Oswald had been arrested in New Orleans while passing out FPC C leaflets the ex-marine had gotten into a heated argument with three members of an anti-castro organization and he was arrested for disturbing the peace so when a third report on Oswald came clattering in by teletype on Tuesday afternoon October 8th Angleton paid attention from Mexico City station chief Winn Scott said a man calling himself Lee Oswald had contacted a consular officer at the Soviet embassy Scott's cable let's see if we can get

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Scott's cable let's see if we can get that here Scott's cable was slugged Elsie improve and you can see that at the top Elsie improved was the code name for quote counter espionage involving Soviet intelligence services worldwide Angleton's undisputed domain other cables read by Angleton's successor George Culeros reported that Oswald had visited the Cuban consulate in other words this was a national security event a former defector to the Soviet Union known to the counterintelligence staff for four years and now active on behalf of a pro-castro organization that had been targeted for destruction by the FBI and the CIA had visited the Cuban consulate in Mexico City which Angleton himself had cited as a locus of Cuba's regime activities

okay angleton had not forgotten about the Cuban consulate in the four months since he wrote his Cuban capabilities memo when a character like Oswald showed up at the Cuban consulate this was very important and it was treated as such at CIA headquarters angleton staff responded within 48 hours on October 10th Jane Roman drafted and sent a cable to other agencies in Washington FBI oh ni State Department reporting that Oswald wrongly described as 6-foot 12 and 35 years old had been overheard contacting the Russians in Mexico City then later that afternoon Roman and Betty Aguilar drafted a second cable this one addressed to win Scott in Mexico City they showed a draft this is the the bottom of the the cable indicates who signed on it so Roman Jane Roman had it in draft and she wrote that and then she showed it to Betty editor and then they

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showed it to Betty editor and then they took it to John whitin the chief of the west of the Mexico desk and he signed off as well and then they took it to Angleton's friend Bill Hood who was serving as chief of operations for the Western Hemisphere and he signed off and then they took it to Tom Cara maecenas the trusted deputy of the trusted assistant to Deputy Director dick Helms and he signed off to be sure Angleton's name does not appear on this table but the five subordinates who produced it did not act in defiance of his wishes or without his knowledge not if they cared about their security clearance their job security their pensions or their reputations curiously the second Cable said nothing about Oswald's recent arrest in New Orleans or his activities on behalf of the FPC see with the latest FBI reports on Jane Romans desk Angleton's people could have described Oswald as a law breaking communist with and sometimes violent supporter of Fidel Castro instead the cable to Scott was curiously reassuring the agency had not received any new information on Oswald since his return from the Soviet Union a year and a half ago according to the cable let's go back and look at that latest headquarters information was a State Department report dated May 1962 state had determined Oswald is still a US citizen and his Soviet whites have exit permits and State Department approval for their travel with their infant child if the October 10 cable was to be believed and when Scott believed it the CIA had gathered no information on Oswald since his return from the Soviet Union 17 months before that to put it plainly was alive the cable was deceptive as Jane

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alive the cable was deceptive as Jane Roman would later admit when I interviewed at her house in Washington when I showed her a copy of the cable she said yeah I'm signing off on something that isn't true I went to see Bill Hood then living in retirement on Long Island and asked him about the cable why didn't the CIA share the most recent FBI reporting on Oswald with Scott hood self silent after after brief sign he said I don't think there's anything smelly in it which I thought was a curious cumin and then he added I don't see a master hand in it well if there was a master hand it was Angleton's the CIA's latest headquarters information on Oswald was not 17 sold it was too much it was less than two weeks old in the execution of a secret operation Angleton's omission would have been justified if Oswald's Cuba related activities in 1963 were somehow part of an authorized covert operation then when Scot had no need to know about them which begs the question was Angleton running Oswald as an agent for some intelligence purpose he certainly had the knowledge and ability to do so he was searching for a mole he and his staff had a granular knowledge of Oswald's life his movements his family and his political views angleton had a penchant for running operations outside of normal reporting channels he articulated a vigilant anti-communism that depicted the results of JFK's liberal policies in apocalyptic terms he participated in discussions of assassination and he worked in a penumbra of cunning that his admirers did not fail to mention quote angleton possessed a unique grasp of secret operations dick Helms wrote in his memoir Jim had the ability to raise an operational discussion not only to a higher level but to another dimension in

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higher level but to another dimension in 1963 1964 and even into the 1970s James Angleton could plausibly deny the existence of an operation involving Oswald those denials are much less plausible today as to the nature and purpose of this operation if there was one we're only left to speculate I can only say it most likely concerned what concerned angleton which was the mole hunt and the effort to change the regime in Cuba via an engineered provocation in any case the time stamp on the table indicates Angleton's omission with precision 10 October 1963 5:29 p.m. Washington time at that moment President Kennedy was finishing up a busy day in the aw in the Oval Office he'd spent the morning with his national security advisors and he ended the day conferring with two leaders of newly independent African nations he had 42 days to live within a week of Oswald's visit to Mexico City and this is this is new this is what bill Simpa alerted me to and I think it's important angle Tinley a mole hunt in Mexico this Mohan underscore is a reality that's largely been unknown to people who follow Angleton that the Morel hunt extended beyond the Soviet Russia division it reached into Mexico City into the very offices that had been watching and reporting on Lee Oswald in the fall of 1963 these d-class Declassified records unearthed by sympathy show that angleton was worried about the CIA's Mexico operas Mexico operations may have been compromised by an FBI informant of the codename lay Rob who was actually in Angleton's view possibly a Soviet double agent Angleton's friend bill hood chief of

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Angleton's friend bill hood chief of operations in the Western Hemisphere then ordered an office of security team to interrogate the Mexican employees of the CIA offices in Mexico City and Monterrey the first three employees who were questioned on October 8th 1963 were the three men who manned the surveillance points that watched the Soviet and Cuban diplomatic offices in Mexico City the very offices that Oswald had visited the week before whether these men were asked about Oswald is unknown the interrogators filed a report on each person who they questioned in during the Mexico mole hunt and the result was 21 reports on 21 different employees and with each report came an attachment that described the contents of the interview what they were actually questioned about of the 21 reports that are now found in the JFK records collection the attachments are missing on 18 of them the mole mexico city was completed between October 8th and October 18th the results were analyzed in Washington and the results were sent to Bill Hood and to angleton in early November the office of security found some security breaches some loose talk among family members but no type of compromise like that was feared by angleton as far as the office of security was concerned there was no mole in Mexico City all the while Lee Oswald remained a figure of interest on November 15th Jane Roman signed for the latest FBI report on Oswald from New Orleans senior agent Warren Dubois had filed a more detailed memo on Oswald's pro-castro activities if angleton scanned the first page he learned that Oswald had gone back to Texas after his trip to Mexico City angleton knew that Oswald was in Mexico City and he knew now that he was back in Fort Worth angleton always sought to

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Fort Worth angleton always sought to give the impression that he knew very little about Lee Oswald before November 22nd 1963 for the chief of the agency's counterintelligence staff that was a frail defense his staff had monitored Oswald's movements for four years as the former Marine moved from Moscow to Minsk to Fort Worth to New Orleans to Mexico City and then to Dallas the Special Investigations Group received reports on him every step of the way by the time President Kennedy was preparing for a trip to Dallas Angleton knew Oswald was in Texas you can interpret that however you want the plain fact is that an epic counterintelligence failure culminated on Angleton's watch there's no evidence that Angleton knew the president's life was in danger before November 22nd there's overwhelming evidence that Angleton had much to hide when Oswald was arrested for gunning down Jack Kennedy in broad daylight and there's no doubt that Angleton succeeded in hiding most of that evidence let's talk about the cover-up after Kennedy's assassination that day deputy director dick Helms put John whitin chief of the Mexico desk in charge of collating all reports on Oswald everything that had been learned Angleton did not offer any evidence or theories of KGB involvement he didn't argue that Castro was behind Oswald he just tried to Fort John Witten quote in the early stages mister angleton was not able the influence the course of the investigation wit and

testified in secret session years later he was extremely embittered that I was entrusted with the investigation and he wasn't in a meeting with Witten and Helms on Christmas Eve 1963 Angleton attacked the latest draft on witness report on Oswald as erroneous and unacceptable Helms relieved Witten on the spot and put Angleton in charge of

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the spot and put Angleton in charge of the Oswald investigation well Helms wanted somebody to conduct the investigation who was in bed with the FBI Witten snorted I was not and angleton was Angleton's power had reached a peculiar apex the ambush in Dallas marked the worst intelligence failure of the United States since December 7th 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and it happened on Angleton's watch yet such was his bureaucratic stealth that he managed to wind up in charge of the agency's investigation of the accused assassin before JFK's death angles and staff knew more about Lee Oswald than just about anyone in the US government after the president was dead Angleton orchestrated the cover-up of what the CIA knew one Angleton one advantage angleton had was that the Warren Commission trusted the CIA in February 1964 the Commission staff learned that the CIA had provided the Secret Service with several cables on the night of the assassination including the October 10 cable that I referred to before the Commission asked the agency to produce the material angleton resorted to deflection but he needed Helms support to rebuff the investigators Jim does not desire to respond directly Angleton's deputy ray rocket told Helms in a memo unless you feel otherwise Jim would prefer to wait out the Commission rather than turn over the CIA's records in their original form Jim would prefer to wait out the Commission why on earth would a senior a official weighed out the investigators of a presidential assassination Roca claimed that there was nothing of interest in the in the cables but of course in intelligence work the source of the information matters as much as its content the cables included photographs of people coming and going from the Cuban embassy and the passenger

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from the Cuban embassy and the passenger manifest to people flying from Mexico City to Havana and what these documents showed was that the CIA had the ability and the desire to photograph and identify every visitor to the Cuban consulate in Mexico City to identify every potential American traveler to Cuba and the October 10 Cable proved that Oswald was no exception angleton preferred to wait out the Warren Commission rather than explain the CIA's knowledge of an interest in Oswald and particularly his visit to the Cuban consulate probably because that visit involved some kind of covert operation if they come back on Howard Whillans so if they came back on the point rocket told Helms Angleton feels that you or someone should be prepared to go over to the Commission with the materials and pass them rather than pass them on in copy Howard will ins an attorney for the Commission did come back on the point he asked to see the original document he was shown summaries instead and he came away satisfied I consider the CIA representatives to be among the more competent people in government who I have ever dealt with he wrote in his diary after meeting with raka they articulate they are specialists they do not have special access to grind in the Commission's investigation willins never imagined the CIA was deceiving him on the fundamental facts of the events leading to the death of the president in the fullness of time will will ins realized he'd been duped my journal comments about the naive about the CIA were naive to say the least woman's told me the CIA did have access to grind in particular the Wilin said the agency's failure to disclose the plots to kill Castro compromised the Warren Commission Angleton participated in that cover-up - on May 8th 1964 Angleton received a memo from Hal Swenson chief of counterintelligence for the Cuba operations Swenson had learned from her we'll source in the Cuban Armed Forces the Castro had probably known about the CIA's recruitment of Rolando Cabella as

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CIA's recruitment of Rolando Cabella as an assassin in 1963 chabela the am lana shot operation which was the code name for the cuba operation might have been the source of us might have been an insecure operation prior to the assassination of President Kennedy thus we know Angleton was winning to another plot to kill Castro by May 1964 at least the implications were obvious if Castro knew about the am lash plot and he had a motive for killing Kennedy angleton chose not to investigate this apparent breach of security he did not turn Swensons memo over to the Warren Commission indeed he seems to have destroyed it which in any other homicide investigation would have been tantamount to obstruction of justice when angleton was called to testify about these events later he lied when asked if Oswald had ever been interrogated when he returned from Russia Angleton fumbled for words I don't probably wouldn't I don't know I just don't know whether the military would normally fall within the jurisdiction of the military since he was a military man who defected Angleton babbled so I don't know the answer to that in fact Angleton did know the answer the FBI was in to interview with Oswald in the summer of 1962 had been sent to his office Betty egged or signed for it when the attorneys for the House Select Committee on assassinations pressed him about his knowledge of the Castro assassination plots Angleton hedged the question I want to ask you the attorney asses do you recall approximately when you learned the information about the Castro assassination plots before was it before or after the Warren Commission I am certain angleton said that it was well after the Warren Commission compiled its work that was perjury Angleton's willingness to violate the law is not it's hard to defend but it's not hard to understand a serious counter espionage investigation of Lee Oswald would have uncovered Angleton's abiding interest in him it would have uncovered the various operations tuhoe Castro it would have revealed the damning fact that no matter who fired the fatal shot in Dallas

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who fired the fatal shot in Dallas angleton had failed disastrously as counterintelligence chief to hide this sorry reality Helms and Angleton fed the Warren Commission the cover story that they knew very little about Oswald before the assassination that the ascent the CIA didn't even know that he had visited the Toobin consulate until after JFK was dead that was a small but very telling why the fact that Angleton knew that Oswald had visited the Cuban consulate was proof that also was a figure of interest of intense interest in the fall of 1963 it had to be denied suppressed and erased from the record to sustain the cover story of a lone nut' Angleton could have and probably should have lost his job after November 22nd had the public the Congress and the Warren Commission known of his pre assassination interest in Oswald and his post assassination cover-up he surely would have instead his malfeasant abetted by dick Helms went undetected angleton would remain in a position of supreme power for another decade and so Jim angleton came to embody the untouchable power of the American national security state after November 1963 thank you [Applause] [Music]

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